

The Powers Parade—Heart, Not Hoopla

Francis Gary Powers was promised a restrained, if heartfelt, salute today from his fellow Virginians in the coal country of the Appalachians.

No ticker tape. No thunderous acclaim. Just a half hour's ride through his native countryside and a scrupulously simple hour or so on a platform in the armory at Big Stone Gap.

He is quoted as saying he is "deeply touched."

Today an estimated 1,500 southwest Virginia country folk rather to welcome their fellow

mountain boy back from his ordeal: 22 months in Soviet prisons. Since his release, there has been a month of interrogation by his Central Intelligence Agency superiors and the Senate Armed Services Committee.

It was going to be a welcome all right, but scarcely the spontaneous combustion astronaut John Glenn touched off in Washington, New York and New Concord, Ohio, these last few weeks. "Glenn," said one of the townsfolk, "had a celebration. This is a welcome home."

Mayor Carl Murphy, one of the officials who helped to plan the event, told The Post:

"There's a lot of opinion, pro and con. We tried not to find out about it because we don't want to stir things up. You know how some fanatics are."

Whose idea was it, to stage a homecoming?

"Somebody asked that the other day during the planning meeting. Nobody would own up to it. But we're going ahead with full support."

Powers will ride in a motor-

cade some 25 miles from his native Pound, Va., to Big Stone Gap, where the ceremony has been scheduled for the armory. It will be a short ceremony—six mayors maybe a Congressman on the stand, a couple of high school bands. (Gov. Harrison declined an invitation, citing the press of duties.)

It will be sweet, and short. Carl McAfee, longtime friend of the Powers family, observed: "We're just a small community. We'll welcome him home and that's it."